

Press Release



27 September 2010

For Immediate Release

Sir Michael Parkinson guest speaker at the Musicians Benevolent Fund Annual Festival of Saint Cecilia, 24 November 2010

- **Sir Michael Parkinson will be guest speaker at the Festival Lunch at Banqueting House in Whitehall**
- **BBC Presenters Diane Louise Jordan and Sean Rafferty will read lessons at the Festival Service in Westminster Abbey**
- **World premiere of specially commissioned anthem *Vast Ocean of Light* by Jonathan Dove at the Festival Service performed by the combined choirs of Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral and St Paul's Cathedral**

The Musicians Benevolent Fund will be celebrating its annual Festival of Saint Cecilia on Wednesday **24 November 2010** at Westminster Abbey and Banqueting House. Held since 1946, as a tribute to The Patron Saint of Music, this event continues a tradition in bringing together over 1000 people to celebrate music and musicians, making it the Fund's biggest event of the year.

The Festival begins with a Service at Westminster Abbey at 11am and will be followed by a reception and Lunch at Banqueting House in Whitehall where the guest speaker will be renowned broadcaster and journalist Sir Michael Parkinson. On his involvement, Sir Michael says:



"During my long career as a TV and radio broadcaster, I had the enormous privilege of interviewing and hearing some of the greatest musicians of our time as well as helping to promote new talent. What shines through with musicians, whether they work in opera, rock, classical or jazz is that they love what they do and communicate that to us, their audiences. Music touches all of us at all stages of our lives and I'm thrilled to have been asked to speak at this special celebration of the Musicians Benevolent Fund. It's a unique organisation, helping those who give us the music."

Other special guests at the Festival are popular BBC Songs of Praise presenter Diane Louise Jordan and respected arts broadcaster and presenter of BBC Radio 3's In Tune Sean Rafferty, who will both read lessons at the Service. A unique feature of the Service each year is the performance of a specially commissioned anthem and this year is no exception with the world premiere of Jonathan Dove's anthem *Vast Ocean of Light*. Dove joins Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gerald Finzi, John Tavener, John Rutter, Roxanna Panufnik, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies and Tarik O'Regan, who have all composed anthems for previous Festivals. The music will be performed by the combined choirs of Westminster Abbey, Westminster Cathedral and St Paul's

Cathedral.



The theme of the Festival is *Music Feeds the Soul*. Talking about the theme and the Musicians Benevolent Fund, Jonathan Dove says:

“Making a living from writing music is wonderfully exciting and rewarding - but also completely unpredictable. It's a great comfort to know the Musicians Benevolent Fund is there, to support and encourage musicians at all stages of their careers. The annual Festival of St Cecilia celebrates musical inspiration: whatever our beliefs music nourishes our spirit and reawakens the best in us.”

The Musicians Benevolent Fund invites you to join this musical celebration together with fellow musicians and music lovers. Tickets for the Festival Service are complimentary and tickets for the Lunch are available from the Musicians Benevolent Fund at a cost of £90. Become a Friend of the Fund and receive a special discount. Please call 020 7239 9114 or [order online](#)

To find out more about the Musicians Benevolent Fund visit the Fund's new website: helpmusicians.org.uk

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Notes to Editors:

About the Musicians Benevolent Fund

The Musicians Benevolent Fund is a unique charity which provides essential help to musicians of all ages across a range of genres. The Fund supports music professionals throughout their working lives when a crisis such as an accident or illness can have a devastating impact and in later life, with the challenges that disability or growing older can bring. It also supports young aspiring musicians to help them enter the profession with the best chance of success.

The Fund celebrates its 90th anniversary in 2011. Its role in the modern age requires ongoing research and dialogue with musicians so that support can be directed to them in the most relevant and dynamic way in what is a continually changing social and musical landscape. Musicians don't need to be members or subscribe to qualify for help. The Fund welcomes musicians of all ages who play, create, sing or teach all styles of music.



Musicians Give is the new fundraising campaign of the Musicians Benevolent Fund. Musicians, music promoters and music lovers are asked to sign up to the campaign at musiciansgive.org.uk. The aim is to raise £10m over the next five years to guarantee support for musicians in need. The campaign has three strands.

Musicians in Crisis - providing working musicians with substantial and immediate intervention when they experience a major and sudden crisis, such as serious illness, accident or emotional breakdown

Musicians Staying Connected - A lifetime in music means just that. A lifetime. Staying Connected will give older musicians the support they need, when they need it most.

Musicians Launchpad - providing crucial support for today's rising musical stars to ensure they have the best possible chance to become tomorrow's professionals

Please note that the Musicians Benevolent Fund is no longer using the acronym

'MBF' and should be referred to as 'the Musicians Benevolent Fund' or 'the Fund' thereafter.

For further press information and high resolution images or if you would like to review the Festival anthem, please contact:

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